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13 January 1965

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

COMMUNIST TROOP MOVEMENTS IN LAOS

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Office of Current Intelligence

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
13 January 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Communist Troop Movements in Laos

1. [redacted] approximately 4,000-5,000 Communist troops may have moved into southern Laos during the past month. In addition, about 1,000-1,500 enemy troops were reported moving into positions in Central Laos, in the Nhommarath-Mahaxay area east of Thakhek.

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2. The movement of Communist troops into the Muong Phine-Tchepone region of southern Laos coincided roughly with the reopening in mid-December of the road (Route 23) linking Mu Gia Pass on the North Vietnamese border with Route 9, about 75 miles to the south. This key artery had been closed since last June as a result of heavy monsoonal rains.

3. Our estimate of southbound troop movement is based on the following observations (see map):

<u>Date</u>	<u>Observation</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Troops</u>
12-- 16 Dec	7 VC bns [redacted] moving into Laos	Posit 1	2800 - 3500
14 Dec	300 PL/VC troops [redacted] [redacted]	Posit 3	300
16 Dec(?)	2 VC bns [redacted] between 12-16 Dec	Posit 2	800 - 1000

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Observation</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Troops</u>
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14-
15 Dec

3 PL bns and 500 VC [redacted]
[redacted] moving south

Posit 5 1700-
2000

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16-
18 Dec

2000 PL and 500 VC seen by
roadwatch team moving south

Posit 4 2500

COMMENT: The above group of sightings--with
the ever present discrepancies as to precise
timing and numbers--appears to reflect a move
southward along Route 23 of 2000-2500 troops.

20 Dec

50 trucks each with 30 PL/
"Chinese," [redacted]
moving south

Posit 1 1500

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21 Dec

20 trucks, each with 30 VC,
[redacted] moving
south

Posit 1 600

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22 Dec

50 trucks, each with an
unknown number of troops,
[redacted] moving south

Posit 1 1000-
1500

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23-
26 Dec

Trucks heard "continuously
moving" south by roadwatch team
between 1900-2400 hours

Posit 4 unknown

COMMENT: The above [redacted]--involving
[redacted] rough estimates--
probably are considerably exaggerated. Allow-
ing for overstatement and possible duplica-
tion, it seems likely that between 2000-2500
troops were involved in these moves, bringing
the total southbound movement to 4-5000
troops.

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4. In addition to the 4-5000 troops estimated
to have moved south along Route 23 in late December,
over 80 trucks carrying unidentified cargo have been
reported southbound in January.

5. Roadwatch teams have also reported a sizable movement of Communist troops westward along Route 12 toward the Mahaxay-Nhommarath area, totaling probably--allowing for some exaggeration--between 1000-1500 troops. This estimate is based upon the following observations:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Observation</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Troops</u>
15 Dec	7 trucks, each with 30 VC troops moving west	Posit 6	210
	<u>COMMENT</u> : Probably included in 16 Dec sighting		
16 Dec	19 trucks, each with 25 VC troops moving west	Posit 7	475
17 Dec	15 trucks, each with an unknown number of VC troops moving west	Posit 7	300-475
20 Dec	8 trucks, each with 25 VC troops moving west	Posit 6	200
21 Dec	10 trucks, each with 30 VC troops moving west	Posit 6	300
26 Dec	4 trucks, each with 30 VC troops moving west	Posit 6	120
31 Dec- 1 Jan	55 trucks, with 250 u/i troops moving west	Posit 7	250
3 Jan	9 trucks, each with 30 VC troops moving west	Posit 6	270

6. There is a slim possibility that some of the above troops subsequently moved south toward the Huong Phine-Tchepone area along Route 121, a factor which would slightly alter the overall estimates cited above. Reports indicate that in mid-December, efforts were under way to make that route passable for truck traffic.

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This map illustrates the road network in North Vietnam and its proximity to neighboring countries. The main map covers North Vietnam, Burma, China, and Thailand. Key locations include Ssumao, Nam, Phong Saly, Dien Bien Phu, Sam Neua, Hanoi, Nam Tha, Muong Sai, Ban Houei Sai, Luang Prabang, Sayaboury, Vang Vieng, Pak Sane, Vinh, Kam Keut, Nhommarath, Thakhek, Dong Hoi, and Attapeu. The Mekong River is shown flowing through the region. A legend indicates that solid lines represent roads, dashed lines represent tracks or trails, and lines with cross-ticks represent railroads. Numbered circles (7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 23, 91) are placed along various routes. An inset map in the bottom left corner provides a detailed view of the 'OBSERVATION POINTS' area, showing routes 1 through 5 and 121, and locations like Kam Keut, Lak Sao, Ban Khen, Na Kay, Nhommarath, Mahaxay, Thakhek, Seno, Savannakhet, Mu Gia Pass, Ha Tinh, Bai Duc Thon, Tchepone, Saravane, and Muong Phine. A scale bar for the inset shows 0 to 50 miles. The main map has a scale bar for 0 to 100 miles. The map is labeled with 'CHINA', 'BURMA', 'NORTH VIETNAM', 'HANOI', 'GULF OF TONKIN', 'THAILAND', 'SOUTH VIETNAM', and 'CAMBODIA'.

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